

*W<sup>m</sup> Knight*

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THE  
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*He that has Ears to hear, let Him hear!*

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By a GENTLEMAN of the Inner-Temple.

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Printed for J. ROBERTS, at the Oxford-  
Arms in Warwick-Lane.

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ОПРОСІОН



Бібліотека Британського музею



THE  
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OPPOSITION.

HERE is a single Point in which all Parties, how much soever they differ about other Things, unanimously agree; and it is this, that nothing can be of more dangerous Consequence at this critical Juncture, to this Nation, than *the continuing of our Divisions*. Indeed there requires no great Penetration to discern this, since every body knows and confesses, that our Debts, our Taxes, and in reality every other Evil, the Weight of which we feel, and of the Burthen of which we complain, have been all brought upon us by our Divisions. It cannot therefore but be an acceptable Thing to state the Case truly, and to shew the Grounds of our present Divisions, that every honest Man may know which Side to chuse, and by going over to that Side, preponderate the *Scale of Justice and Equity*, since what

what Solon made a Law in Athens, will remain a true political Maxim amongst every free People; that in Debates which regard the Constitution, every Man ought to take either the one Side or the other. In Matters of small Moment, we may be indifferent; but here, where both Parties confess our ALL is at Stake, we are bound to make our Choice. To be *Lukewarm* in the *Cause* of our *Country*, is to be *against it*.

It is now somewhat more than twenty Years, that a certain Party hath subsisted amongst us, under the Title of *the Opposition*; they have at certain Times been composed of very different People, and consequently have been considered in different Lights; but the proper Characteristic of the Party, and that from which it derives it's Name, is the *Opposing of Power*, or endeavouring to circumscribe in Parliament the Grants of Money and Extention of Authority, which have from Time to Time been demanded by several Administrations. Now, if this Scheme of Opposition has been right with Regard to the Interest of the Nation, that is to say, if the People of *Great-Britain* would have been Gainers, by putting in Practice what the Persons from Time to Time concerned in this Opposition propos'd, then, without Question, the Design of the Opposition is *right* upon the whole, though at particular Times, and by particular Persons, it might be prosecuted on *wrong Motives*.

It is necessary to make this Distinction between the Scheme supported by the Party, who have formed the Opposition for so many Years, and the private Views of particular Persons, who have at certain Times engaged therein, because the common

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Topick of Reproach into which the Writers on the Side of Power unanimously run, is this; that Men have often contradicted themselves, and notwithstanding the Language they have made Use of when *out*, have avowed quite opposite Doctrines when *in*. Now the plain meaning of this, is no more than that particular Persons have had great Failings, and have in *different Scituations*, contended with equal Vehemence for *different Things*. That this may, and ought to affect them I do not deny; but certainly their Behaviour could no way affect *Things* themselves. If the Demands of the Administration for so many Years past, were just and reasonable, then all *Opposition* was *unjust* and *unreasonable* from whatever Quarter it came; and on the other Hand, if the proposing a strict Examination into publick Affairs, a narrow Inspection of all the Pretences on which either Money or Power were demanded by Men at the Helm, was with respect to the Interest of this Nation fit and right, then the *Opposition* was always a *good Thing*, though possibly all who were concerned in it might not be *good Men*.

Such as have endeavoured to set the Conduct of those in the Opposition constantly in a *bad Light*, have found themselves under a Necessity of *misrepresenting* the *Thing*, and therefore the first Step to be taken in order to give such as are impartial a just insight into this Matter, is to render these Misrepresentations *manifest*, which is the Design of this Paper. *Opposition* in the Stile of some People, is a Term Synonymous with *Disaffection*, and great Pains has been taken to make the World believe, that none ever oppose a Government, who *wish well*

to it. But this is certainly begging the Question, and by proving *too much*, proves *nothing*. If we consider the Reason of the Thing, and take for our Guide a Maxim in which all Parties at present agree, *viz.* *That the End of Government is the Good of the Subject*, then it will appear very possible for such as mean the Government well, to oppose such as are in the *Administration* of it, unless it can be shewn, that Men vested with Power, have never aimed at *violating* their *Trust*, or that according to the Principles of our Constitution, such as have the *executive Part* of the Government in their *Hands*, are the *only fit Judges* how they ought to use it. But as these are Notions absolutely repugnant to Liberty and Common Sense, so they have been long ago exploded; and therefore as I said before, all Circumstances taken in, it must be allowed that *Opposition* is not *malum in se*, or a direct and conclusive Proof of *Disaffection*, but quite the contrary.

Experience has verified this in all Reigns, and if we go no higher than the Restoration, it will be no hard Task to prove, that the *best Friends* of every Government, have at certain Times found themselves under a Necessity of *opposing it*. Every Body knows that the *Cavaliers* in the Reign of King *Charles II.* were against the Earl of *Clarendon's* Administration, and yet nobody ever imagined that they were *Enemies* to that King, or that they intended by their Conduct in this Point, any *Prejudice*, either to his Majesty's *Person* or *Government*. The Earl of *Clarendon* was certainly a very great, and a very deserving Man; but he was likewise a very over-bearing, and a very opiniative Minister. I do not pretend to enter into the Merits

Merits of that Opposition; it might be *right* in some Respects, and *wrong* in others: I mention it only to prove, that the best Friends to a Prince may think themselves obliged even by their being so, to oppose his *Ministers*. The *Cavaliers* in the same Reign, acted the same Part with respect to another Ministry, stiled the *Cabal*, and from the very same Motives. In the succeeding Reign, such as wished the King *well*, and *suffer'd* afterwards for their *Affection* to him, *oppos'd* his Measures with the greatest Firmness, and never thought themselves, nor have been thought by Posterity the *worse Subjects*, but the *better* upon that Account. They fore-saw that the *Steps* the King and his *Ministers* were taking, would prove *fatal* to the *Nation* and to *him*, and therefore they did all that lay in their Power to prevent their taking *Effect*; but they did this in a *legal Way*, either by an *Opposition* in *Parliament*, or by dutifully expressing their Sentiments in *Petitions* to his Majesty, when no *Parliament* was subsisting; and though they were *blam'd* and *persecuted* for this, at the Time they did it, yet their *Conduct* was justified by the *Event*.

After the Revolution, when the *Nation* was effectually cured of some political Prejudices, equally dangerous to Prince and People, there frequently appeared a *Spirit* of the same Kind among the *best Friends* to the Government, as it was then established. They remember'd what Measures were thought oppressive and unjust in *former Reigns*, and they opposed them in this. Mr. *Trenchard*, who wrote the *History of Standing Armies*, was undoubtedly as true a Friend to the Revolution, and as desirous of supporting King *William's* Government, as any Man in the

*Nation*

Nation, and yet he thought himself at Liberty to cross as far as lay in his Power, the *Designs* of some of that King's *Ministers*, and to express as great a Concern for what he took to be the *true Interest* of his *Country*, as if the *Revolution*, in which he heartily concurr'd, had never happen'd. It must be confessed, and great Advantages have been taken from it, that there were at that Time Abundance of People who *join'd* in opposing the Government, because they were *disaffected* to it; but this bad Design of theirs could not operate on such Measures as were *right* in themselves; but they remain'd still *right*, though these People maintained them to be so from *wrong Motives*. Without Question, the opposing *standing Armies*, Increase of publick Debts, and making *secret and suspicious Treaties* with foreign Powers, were Acts very laudable in themselves, and not at all the less so because ill Men concurred in them. We live at such a Distance of Time as enables us to see that in these Points they thought *justly* and reason'd *right*. The Things they attempted to prevent, have had very fatal Consequences, and therefore it had been happy for the Nation if they had been prevented. To say that all who were embark'd in this Opposition were *Patriots*, would be certainly *false*; but then it would be as *false* to assert, that *none* were engaged in that Opposition but *Jacobites*. There will be honest Men and bad Men, sincere and insincere, of all Parties; but the true Way to judge of the Merit of any Party, is to consider its *Principles*.

In Queen *ANNE*'s Time, there were several *Oppositions*, and these carried on with great Heat and Passion; and yet such as were concerned in them, insisted

insisted, and many of them I believe with Justice, that none *wished better* to the Queen and her Government, than they did. In short, if we should pretend to take it for granted, that all such as have opposed the Administration were at least *concealed Enemies* to the *Government* under which they lived, we must run into a very gross Mistake, since none shewed greater Fidelity to the Crown at that Time, than such as acted against its *Ministers*. To sum up all, as no set of Men amongst us have scrupled to oppose at some time or other the Administrations under which they lived; this is a convincing Argument, that all Parties have thought it lawful, just, and expedient, no way derogatory to their Duty, no sort of Blemish to their Loyalty, and therefore we ought in this Respect, to prefer their concurring Testimonies to the warm Declamations of prejudic'd Persons, who would have us believe, that *Spite* appears in no Dress, more commonly than in that of *publick Spirit*. If therefore we must condemn *all Parties*, if we condemn *Opposition* in general, it is better to acquit *all*, and to confess that *Opposition*, as well as *Attachment*, is govern'd by Circumstances, and that as it is not impossible Men may *betray* a *Government* they *serve*, so on the other Hand, it is not improbable that *Zeal* for the *publick Service* may induce Men to *oppose* the Measures of such as are intrusted with the *Management* of *publick Affairs*.

From what has been said, it clearly and evidently appears, that there can be nothing more groundless than those Insinuations which we so frequently hear thrown out, as if Opposition could proceed from nothing else but a *Dislike* to the *Prince* upon

upon the *Throne*: whereas, generally speaking, it may with much greater Propriety be referred to a *high Concern for his Safety*. Besides, according to our Constitution, and as we ought always to be consider'd, as a *free People*, Regard to the Nation, is Loyalty to the King; for such as pretend to make any Difference between *his Interests*, and those of his *Subjects*, may be his *Minions*, but can never possibly be his *Friends*. Such Persons for their own Interest may *mislead* him; but it does by no means follow, that because they *deceive* him, it becomes the Part of every *good Subject* to *shut his Eyes*; it having been long ago determined here, that Kings are to be consider'd in their *political Capacity*, in which as the Law supposes they *do no wrong*; so it must be understood, not to lay the People under any Necessity of *suffering Wrong*. These are Maxims that may be gathered from the *unrepealable Parts* of our *Constitution*, such as the *Bill of Rights*, and therefore in adhering to these it cannot, it ought not to be surmised, that Men depart from their *Duty*, since that would imply a Distinction between *Loyalty*, and the *Love of one's Country*, which can never happen under a *limited Monarchy*. The plain Meaning of the Term, being this, that the *Power* of the *Sovereign* is restrained by those *Laws* which have been thought necessary for the *common Benefit* of his *People*.

If we carry these Speculations a little farther, we shall soon meet with incontestable Proofs of their being *just* and *right*. The Happiness of a Prince can consist in only these two Points, being *easy at Home*, and *respected Abroad*. Now nothing can be clearer than that an *impoverish'd, corrupted* and

and vicious People must render their Monarch *uneasy*, because they can neither *support* his *Dignity* in a proper Manner, nor can he rely upon their *Fidelity*; and as plain it is, that a King in such Circumstance *at Home*, can never be considered as a *useful Ally*, or a *formidable Enemy* by his *Neighbours*. Whatever therefore contributes to the reducing any Nation into *such* a *Condition*, must contribute at the same time to the *Weakening* the *Authority* of the *Prince*. Forms and Appearances may possibly be preserved for a little while; but Time and Accidents will inevitably betray the *true State of Things* at last, and therefore the *opposing* such *Measures* as have a Tendency to exhausting the Wealth, breaking the Spirits, or corrupting the Manners of a whole Nation, is doing the *biggest Service* to the *Sovereign*; however, *he* or *his Ministers* may conceive it, and such as pursue this Track, will sooner or later be known for his *best* and *truest Friend*, however they may be belied or misrepresented by *Court-Flatterers*, who have been always too frequent, and in too great Favour with *such Kings* as have given the Reins to their Passions, and endeavoured rather to gratify their own Inclinations, than to consult the *Interest* of *themselves* and their *Posterity*, which however, is a *Duty* incumbent upon *them*, as well as *other Men*.

Thefe Things being premised, we shall next proceed to give a short Account of the *Rise* and *Progress* of the *present Opposition*. After the Affair of the *South-Sea*, abundance of Country Gentlemen who had no other *Business* in Parliament than to serve their *Constituents*, began to have their Heads full of melancholy Apprehensions, when they saw

what a Turn that Affair took, and how the *Justice* of the Nation was elluded. They were surprized to see the Ease with which Men united, to serve their own Interests, who but a little while before, had torn each other's *Characters*, and express'd a Desire of tearing one another's *Persons* in *Pieces*. They thought it was a strange Time for such as had put themselves at the *Head* of the *Patriots*, to accept of *Places*, and began to have little Hopes of reaching the *Criminals*, when they saw the *Patrons* of those *Criminals* become both their *Prosecutors* and their *Judges*. The Manner of Mr. *Knight's* going off, alarmed them then as much as his coming home ought to surprize us now. In short, they saw through, and despised this *Juggling*, and from that Time to this, have had a strong *Aversion to Screens.*

These Reflections led them to suspect, that *publick Affairs* were not like to be managed with the utmost *Probity*, while in *certain Hands*. This induced them to be very affiduous in examining the annual *Proposals* to *Parliament* for granting *Money*, increasing the Power of *ministerial Officers*, and approving such *Treaties* as were made with foreign Princes. They knew the Nation laboured under a *heavy Load of Debts* and *Taxes*, and they were willing, if they had been able, to have paid off Part of the one, or to have taken somewhat from the other; but in this they hardly ever prevailed. They expressed a great Apprehension of *penal Laws*, because they saw that by an Extension of the *Excise*, the Tools of every Ministry would be the Masters of the Secrets, and consequently of the Credit of all the trading Part of the Nation. They grew  
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the more jealous of these Laws, when they perceiv'd, that they were very negligently executed, because this very plainly shew'd they were procured for other Purposes, than those which were pretended, since otherwise, such as pres'd the passing, would have took'd with equal Care to their Execution. They were not a little suspicious, that the new Trade of Negotiating would be far from proving Advantageous to the Nation, and they were very much confirm'd in this Notion, when they saw some Men made Choice of for Ministers abroad, who could not so much as make a Bow; and others who had not Capacity enough to write a common Letter. Their Fears increased, when they found us meddling in every Thing, and they were equally Sollicitous about the Honour and Safety of the Kingdom, while its most important Affairs were intrusted to such a Set of strange Politicians. Such was the Rise of this Opposition, and such the Motives that engaged the Gentlemen who originally embarked therein, many of whom are still living, to resolve to exert themselves with Zeal and Diligence in the Service of their Country, without much Regard to their crossing the Designs of those by whom they thought she was very ill served.

At first setting out, this Opposition was considerable, only from the known Characters of those who composed it; their great Fortunes, and extensive Influence in their respective Countries; but by Degrees, it received considerable Accessions, and towards the End of the last Reign, it was become very formidable in point of Numbers. At the beginning, Gentlemen could scarce conceive that Persons of high Rank, and who were look'd upon as

Men of great Parts, could stoop to such low and little Things as were frequently charg'd upon the Administration ; but when they saw with how much Industry all Enquires were avoided, with what an Air of Insolence the Loss of a whole Branch of the publick Revenue, merely through Negligence, was stiled a pedling Affair, and what a Point was made of bringing off, or screening every little Offender ; they began to open their Eyes, and to discover an Inclination of looking more nicely than had been customary for many Years past into publick Accompts, which Inclination of theirs excited such a Vigilance on the other Side, as shew'd plainly this was a sore Place, and would not bear touching.

The Affair of the publick Debts seemed to be a Matter of such mighty Consequence, that all Proposals relating to them, were well beard by all who meant well to their Country, of what Party soever, and yet abundance of rational Proposals for putting them into a better Train of Payment were rejected upon plausible Pretences, till at length the People in Power, by a dextrous Application to the Passions of Men in the manied and in the landed Interest, brought Things into such a Method, as plainly shewed they never intended to Pay them at all. By applying the Produce of the Sinking-Fund to the Service of the current Year, this End was attained, and though the Nation suffered, a great Part of the Nation was made easy. This shewed the Consequence of raising Taxes lightly, and imperceptibly ; for as it defended us from a Land-Tax, it drew many of the Country Gentlemen to think favourably of it ; and as it defended such as drew

large

large Interest from the publick Funds, against the Danger to which they were exposed, of being paid off, in case that Fund had remain'd *untouch'd*; they too were very well pleased, and thus a Stop was put to the only Thing that could have saved us from deep Distress, by lessening our Debts, and allowing us ease in our Taxes, and at the same Time an immense Revenue was left in the Hands of Ministers which enabled them to provide for, and increase their *Defendants*, till by degrees they became so numerous, and were so well posted, that their servile Echo's to their Masters Demands came to be almost as loud and significant too, as the Voice of the Nation.

The exposing of Abundance of *dirty Attempts* to get Money, and the pursuing even *successful Attempts* in Parliament, by Hue and Cry from the Press, till their Iniquity was made manifest to the meanest Capacity, brought Numbers to think more cooly and consistently than they would otherwise have done, and forc'd them, whether they would or not, to discern how low some great Men would stoop, and what vast *Loads* were to be heaped on the already overloaded People, in case the Majority of their Representatives continued to lend their Assistance in laying them upon their Backs. These Disputes, by being frequently repeated, enlarged even ordinary Understanding, and brought the *Ar-  
cana Imperii* within the Comprehension of the common Sort of People. This was complained of as a Kind of *Sacrilege*, a Breach of all *Decorum*, and a subverting the very *Foundation* of Government. Whereas, in Truth it was no more than delivering the People from that Sort of *Egyptian Darkness*,

which

which State *Conjurors* so well know how to raise, in order to cover themselves. It was explaining a *Mystery* in which the People had a *big Concern*; it was shewing them *how* their *Money* went, and *how* they were *fleck'd*, without *feeling* the *Sbeers*. In short, it was doing by them, what any honest Man would do by a young *Heir*; it was setting the *Arts* of these *smooth Cozeners*, in a proper Light, and taking Care to give the Nation fair *Warning* of the *Hands* they were in. A Practice every way *laudable*, notwithstanding its Tendency to destroy the *Respect* generally paid to great Men. Neither was this a *Fault* or an *Inconvenience*, but rather an *Advantage*; for *Respect* is only due to *Benefactors*, when the *Great* turn *Plunderers*, a *free People* owe them *somewhat else*.

In Time too, the *penal Law* began to be known by their *Fruit*; all the *fine Promises* that had been made as to their destroying *Smuggling*, came to nothing; since it was found, that those *Hardships* which bore so heavy on *honest Men*, never reach'd such as they were said to be intended for. It was frequently observed, that the sharpest of these *Acts*, would sleep quietly for several Years, and wake regularly at the Approach of an *Election*. The Trading Part of the World, who at first promised themselves *Relief* from these subtle Contrivances, which they fancied would at least defend them from *Interlopers*, and put all who paid the *Duty*, on the *same Foot*, though a hard one, were quickly undeceived, and taught to their Cost, that *Hardships* once submitted to, are never to be *shook off*, though *Conditions* were talk'd of at the Time of the Imposition. A Concurrence of these Circumstances, occasioned *Bills* of this Nature

ture to find a *slower Passage* than usual, there being none ready to support them, except such as found their *Account* in them.

*Foreign Affairs* took their turn in *publick Examinations*, and though at first it was hardly believ'd that a *British Administration* would enter into *Treaties burthensome to Britain*, yet when *Sessions* after *Sessions*, Measures of this Kind were *exposed*, their Motives *explained*, and their Consequences *foretold*, many who found the Gentlemen in the Opposition, true *Propbets*, began to think them good *Politicians*, especially when they saw that we frequently *chang'd Sides*, and that in Spight of these Changes, we were always on the *same Side* with *France*, though till then our *Interests* were held *irreconcileable*. Thus was that Strength gained, which render'd the *Opposition* so considerable at the Close of the late King's Reign, at the very Point of Time when some think he began to see Things in the *same Light* with the Gentlemen in the *Opposition*.

The Dawn of a *new Reign* inclined every Body to think, that Things would take a *new turn*, especially as they were now generally understood, and the King was known to be a steady Lover of Honour and Justice. Upon this, the *Opposition* laid down their Arms, and went with as great Eagerness to pay their Obedience to the new Monarch, as if they had been sure of *those Places*, which they never *expected*. They manifested their *Concern*, and even their *Complaisance* in many other Respects, purely to shew that their *former Conduct* was the Effect of *Principle*, not of *Prejudice or Selfishness*. But when it clearly appeared that the same Measures were still pursued, when a *Profusion of public Money*

Money was demanded as a Proof of Affection for the Crown, they readily return'd to the Service of their Country, and sacrificing all Hopes of Favour, resumed their former Opposition of whatever appeared to them injurious to the Interests of their Constituents.

The Force of this Opposition, was now so sensibly felt, that there was no longer any trusting to the old Arts of Management; but Recourse was had to bolder Expedients, and this with such Success for a Time, that it bid fair for destroying all Opposition, and for eradicating the Hopes of all who expected to redress Grievances by a legal Method. But as Success is very apt to make bad Men insolent, so many who earn their Wages, were Fools enough to grow proud of their Service, and to declare themselves as much the Dependants of ONE MAN, as if they had worn his Livery. This Imprudence contributed to the Safety of the Society, and like an Eruption in an Epidemic Fever, shewed plainly, that the State was sick at Heart. The Expence of maintaining such a Multitude of craving Creatures, grew daily greater and greater, and the Manner in which they earn'd their own Livings, came at last to be so notorious, that all who had a reasonable Share of Wisdom, and the least remains of Honesty, revolted at once, and by a happy Choice of proper Representatives, brought the Matter to a fair Issue, and demonstrated that the Sense of the Opposition was so far from being the Clamour of a handful of idle disaffected, or discontented Men, that it was in reality the Voice of the People, the Judgment of the uncorrupted, undeceived Part of the Nation, and this one would have thought, had been the Period of the

the *Opposition*, for hitherto the *English History* affords us no Instance of the Heads of a *victorious Party* going over to the *Vanquished*, adopting the *Maxims* they *disclaim'd*, disavowing their *old Principles*, and acting without Shame or Concern those *Parts*, which for many Years together they had made it their Business to *expose*. This *Wonder* was reserv'd for our *Time*, and the *Language* it has provoked, will in all Probability prevent such a *strange Sight* from being ever seen by our *Posterity*.

If the *Opposition* had been what many have affected to represent it, a *violent Spirit rais'd* against a *particular Person*, it ought naturally to have determined when that *Person* was *removed* from *Power*; but as it had in reality quite another Foundation, so those who are thoroughly acquainted therewith, cannot be much surprized at seeing this Event produce no *considerable Change* in this Respect. It may, however, be of very great Service to the Generality of the *People of England*, to explain this Matter thoroughly; and as I pretend to set the *present Opposition* in a *true Light*, I shall first shew how this Notion of its being *particularly directed* against one *Man*, came to be so commonly received: I shall next prove the *Weakness* and *Folly* of giving in to such a *Story*; and I shall afterwards account fairly for the *true Views* of the *Opposition*; which having once done, I shall think my Task perform'd, and leave it, as I apprehend, every *political Controversy* ought to be left to the free and *unbyass'd Judgment* of my *Countrymen*.

When one considers how great a Part of Mankind are govern'd by *Appearances*, and how few, how very few, are capable of looking to the *Bottom*

in such kind of *Disputes* as these, it is far from being difficult to conceive how this *false Opinion* came so generally to prevail. Two Things there were which gave so strong a Colour to this *Notion*, as might easily afford it *Credit* with the *Multitude*. In the first Place, this *single Person* had been in a Manner at the *Head* of the *Administration*, from the Time this *Opposition* began, and as the Measures they all along opposed, were strictly and properly speaking, *his Measures*, there is no great Wonder to be made, that with many, or most People, this *Opposition* might be thought *directed* against *him*. On the other Side, it must be allowed, that there was a *second Reason*, still stronger than the *first*; the Discovery of which we owe to Time, and it is this, That a considerable Party who had join'd the *Opposition*, and by their forwardness therein, in some measure, set themselves at it's *Head*, had really no other *View* than this, as appears by their *deserting* the *Opposition* as soon as it was accomplished; but that this never was the *Sentiments* of the *Party* in general, will appear to those who consider the *Pains* they took to *expose Measures*, not *Men*, and the *remarkable Instance* they gave of their being void of all *personal Resentments*.

The Instance I mean, is the famous Affair of the **MOTION**, which has been so often canvassed, and set in so many *different Lights*, though it was never yet perhaps considered in the *true one*. It was a measure, certainly well calculated, to serve the Purpose for which it was intended; it would have *removed*, had it succeeded, *the Man* who block'd up the Way of *some other Men* to *Power*. And it had at the same Time, an Appearance of  
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serving the *Opposition*, so strong an Appearance, that many were drawn into it, who certainly meant well, and did not perceive the *real Tendency* of that extraordinary Step. But the *wisest* and *firmest* Men in the Opposition, could not be drawn into such a *Desertion* of their *Principles*. They could not be reconciled to a *wrong Method* of doing a *right Thing*. They were afraid of countenancing *arbitrary Power*, by such an *Act* of their *own*, and therefore chose to leave Things to *Time*, and the *Judgment* of the *Nation* in a *new Election*, rather than push a particular *Man* in such a Way, as might seem to determine their *Dislike* to *Him* and *his Measures*, rather than to the *Measures themselves*, by whomsoever pursued. In this, they were certainly right, and this Mark of their high Spirit, true Generosity, and admirable good Sense, ought for ever to stop the Mouths of those, who would resolve *their Opposition* into an inveterate Aversion to a *single Person*.

There could not certainly be any Thing *wiser* in such as had the *Safety* of this *single Person* at Heart, than to propagate to the utmost of their Power this Notion, that the *Opposition* was form'd against *Him*, and against *Him only*. The *British Nation* in general, are too generous, too honest a People to take Pleasure in the persecuting from private Prejudices a *great Man*, merely because he is *Great*, and therefore the considering the *Opposition* in this Light, weaken'd its *Force*, and abated its *Credit* considerably. The same People took also a great deal of Pains to place this in still a stronger View, by representing the *private Character* of the *Person* they supposed to be the *Bust* of the *Opposition*, as every way aimable. He was in their Language,

the most humane, the most benificent, the most ~~courteous~~ Man living ; and above all Things, they magnified that Decency and Moderation, with which he treated his Antagonist, and the Calmness he constantly preserved in Spite of all the rude Attacks that were made upon him. Add to this, that even an Error in their Conduct, contributed not a little to the Success of their Design ; for instead of defending Measures, they constantly defended him, and by perpetually repeating this Story of the Opposition's being personal, which they were perhaps weak enough to believe, they at last hammer'd it into the Head of many, and at the same Time obliged the Chiefs of the other Side to act in such a Manner, as if the Facts they related, had been true. But the Instance I have mention'd, clearly refutes all these Pretences, and justifies the Opposition from any Imputation on this Head, since those who supported the Motion from Principle, did it upon this Distinction ; that Places were no Man's Birthright, and consequently an Attempt to remove a Man from them, was no Attack upon his Person ; while on the other Hand, such of the Opposition as were against the Motion, were against it, because they thought it personal, and in that Light, repugnant to their Principles.

The Defeat of this Scheme of the Motion, which the Friends of the late Administration, who were certainly no very penetrating Politicians, look'd upon as the Ruin of the Opposition, in reality restor'd it, and proved, as they might easily have foreseen, the Ruin of themselves. When Gentlemen came to consider seriously, and without Passion, on what Motives they had acted in that Affair, it appear'd clearly, that the Project of the Motion stood upon

too narrow a Bottom; since in reality their Business was to condemn a Series of destructive Measures, rather than to strike at a single Man, either in his personal, or ministerial Capacity. The former was altogether consistent with their Principles, as an Opposition; but the latter had such an Air of private Prejudice, as gave all their Proceedings an Appearance of Faction. It was therefore, no Wonder that after debating this Matter thoroughly among themselves, the Issue of the Dispute was a closer Union than ever. For when Men see that they ALL mean right in the Main, and that the Points above which they differ are prejudicial to their common Interest, it necessarily engages them to concur with their utmost Force in those Things in which they are clear, and to avoid differing in lesser Matters at least till the main Thing be carried. This then was the Result of their Conferences on that Disappointment, and thus borrowing Strength from their late Defeat, the Opposition became firmer and more formidable than ever, and this at a Time when some short-fighted Politicians consider'd them as broken beyond a Possibility of rallying, and thus they gained a double Advantage from the Wisdom of their own Conduct, and the weak Judgment of those whom they opposed.

The Event as I observed before, fully justified this Method of reasoning, and sufficiently shew'd the Difference between a Personal and a National Opposition. The Resolutions that had been taken to stick entirely to the latter, and to reject whatever carried the least Aspect of the former, operated at the very Beginning of the Sessions, and to the Amazement of such as expected to have seen the

the *Patriots* acting like *Hussars*, by sudden and violent Excursions, they appear'd a steady, well compacted *Phalanx*, which no *Art* could divide, and which no *Force* could break. All their Motions were equally regular, and well conducted, they stood firm upon every *Attack*, and push'd all at once whenever they gave the *Assault*. Instead of smart and lively *Harangues*, they confin'd themselves to short and weighty *Speeches*; they no longer dwelt on the *Oversights* and *Miscarriages* of particular *Persons*, but upon the *Concerns* of the *People*; in short, they brought about a *Change* in the *Ministry*, by pressing for a *Change* in *Affairs*. While they continued in this Situation, they bore all before them, Ministerial *Arts*, and that kind of *Science* which I am ashamed to call by the *Name* fixed upon it, by the greatest *Master* therein, *Parliamentary Craft*, signified nothing, Victory declared on their Side, and the *Mighty* who had been so long used to *Conquest*, were forced to turn all their Thoughts on a *Retreat*: Such were the *Effects* of an *Opposition* acting upon *Principle*, governing all their Motions by a steady *Adherence* to the *public Interest*, and as steady a *Contempt* of *private* and particular *Advantages*. But alas! we must soon shift this Scene.

As too much *Success* had rendered the *Great* careless, and in the End impotent, so this sudden *Reverse* of *Fortune* brought them back to their *Wits*, and though it could not bring them back to *Power*, yet it did what was thought next to impossible, it broke their *Fall*. The Sight of approaching *Ruin* engaged them to change their former *Manner* of *acting*, and now they disclaim'd in

in their Turn all *personal Affection*, and pretended an extraordinary Zeal for the *Whig Interest*. This, whether well or ill founded had a mighty Effect, it introduced a *new Spirit*, which supplied *Courage* to their *fainting Troops*, it engaged many to appear warmly in their *Service*, who were before *indifferent*, and if it did not *dispose*, it at least gave a *Colour* for *some* to *come over* to them who had *fought fiercely* on the other Side. As these Advantages were gain'd by a *Stroke of rational Policy*, so they were managed with the utmost Dexterities; and I am sorry to say, that Men who had never shewn any *great Abilities*, while in the *public Service*, discover'd extraordinary *Capacity* when in this critical Conjunction, they were reduc'd to think only of *serving themselves*. The Point most proper for this Purpose was, that which they pitch'd upon, for with great *Address* they shifted their *Defeat* from the late *Stand* of the *Opposition*, to the almost forgotten *Attempt* of the *Motion*; and as if *that* had produc'd this surprizing *Alteration*, the *Leaders* of a *rejected Project* were set at the *Head* of *Affairs*. This tho' it might satisfy them, satisfied no Body else, and the *Nation* was exceedingly amazed to see what once happen'd in *Italy*, when the late King of *Sardinia* was *General* in chief both of the *French* and *confederate Armies*, happen again in *Britain*, the *same Men* at the *same Time* being at the *Head* of the *Administration*, and of the *Opposition*.

It is not easy to describe the Effects of so strange a Revolution. In all great *Parties* there will be a considerable *Number* of *Persons* who from want of *sound Sense*, or *sound Principles*, will follow their  
*Leaders*

*Leaders at the Expence of their Cause, and go as their Chiefs direct, instead of obeying or perhaps examining the Dictates of their Consciences.* This was the Case here, and a strange Confusion ensued, sometimes we saw a strong Detachment of *Patriots* charging on the Side of *Power*, and sometimes a formidable Body of *Courtiers* making a noble Stand in *Defence of Liberty*. In short, this was a Season when *wise Men* knew not what to say, and therefore we need not wonder, that *weak Men* knew not what to do. On the whole however this is certain, that *some Men's Heads* were more effectually turn'd by the *Acquisition of Power*, than the *Hearts* of others were dejected with the *Loss of it*. Yet to shew how *variable Men* are, and how much the *greatest* are govern'd by the *ebbing and flowing* of their *Spirits*, it may not be amiss to observe, that this little *Gleam of Success* distracted *one* who had recover'd his *Reputation* as to *Capacity*, by the *firmness* he had shewn on his late *Defeat*. Affecting *Airs of Triumph* at *going out* are as distasteful, and consequently as dangerous as the wearing an *Air of Insolence* when *in*, and the not adverting to this plain Maxim, produced such a *Spirit* as nothing else could have produced, and prevented that *Flame* from being *extinguish'd*, which he had so *artfully*, and hitherto so successfully laboured to *subdue*. I know I have deliver'd myself somewhat obscurely, but the *Facts* are *too recent* for me to run any *Risque* of being *misunderstood*.

A *Miscarrage* like this, which all but *thorough Politicians* would have esteemed a *slight one*, gave once more a *new Turn to Affairs*. The *Body of the*





the *Opposition* had again drawn themselves into pretty good Order, and this Accident brought back their Heads, or at least determin'd them to decline going entirely off so soon as they had first intended; but at the same Time, that this gave the *Opposition* some *Advantage*, by preserving its Strength, it likewise did it not a little *Prejudice* by diverting its *Measures*. In short, the *Dispute* became *Personal* again, and instead of inquiring by what *wrong Steps* the *Nation* had been *injured*, it was resolved to enquire what *wrong Steps* could be fix'd upon a *certain Person*. It would be no difficult Thing to shew that he suffer'd *much less* by this, than the *Opposition* itself. There was a great deal of Time wasted to very little Purpose, and in this Time that generous *Spirit* which had hitherto animated the *Opposition* vanished by Degrees. Not to dwell too long on so disagreeable a Subject, the Issue of what at first was esteem'd a *national Affair*, became entirely *personal*, and that which had for a Time been consider'd as the most *solemn Scene* that had ever appear'd on a *political Theatre*, dwindled at length into a *downright Farce*. *Great Men* may be angry when they see themselves made the *Sport*, even of *little People*, but this will always be the Case while the *People* remain *free*, and their *great Men* descend to do *little Things*.

After running thro' as succinctly as we might the *History* of the *Opposition*, and setting the principal Events which have distinguish'd it from other *Oppositions* in their proper Lights, we come now to what is more material, and of far greater Consequence to the *Public*, viz. the Examination of the *Ends* of this *Opposition*, or to borrow for once the Lawyer's Phrase, we are now to look

into the *Merits* of the *Cause*, and with that Earnestness which becomes *honest Men*, and that Fund of good Sense which has ever been allow'd us as *Britons*, to enquire whether the *Principles* of this *Opposition* conduce to *disturb* and *distress* this Nation; or whether properly pursued, they have not the strongest Tendency to *free* us from all our *Misfortunes*, and to silence the *Noise*, by taking away the *Causes* of our *Complaints*. This is to be the Busines of the succeeding Pages, and this I shall treat as clearly and plainly as the Subject will bear, without straining *Facts*, or using a *declamatory Stile*, which very little become an Advocate for **TRUTH**, whose *Charms* like those of a perfect Beauty, cannot be heightened, but may be easily *abated* by the Interposition of *Art*.

In the first Place then, we must learn to satisfy ourselves, whether the Nation really *suffers* under any *Difficulties*, or whether (as a very artful Writer would persuade us) we are only troubled with *political Spleen*. Now a Nation *suffers*, or at least may *suffer* several Ways; but particularly by these three, when *respect* to its Government *declines*, when it's best *Laws* are *worse executed*, and when greater *Sums* are levied for the *public Service*, than the *Fortunes* of *private People* can bear. By any, much more *all* of these Nation may be *enervated*, and brought to the *Brink of Ruin*, as the History of every one great *Monarchy* or flourishing *State* that is now decayed will sufficiently prove.

As to the *first* of these *political Maladies*, the Symptoms which usually attend it are *universal Un-easiness*, a general *Distaste of Power*, and a want of all *Reverence* towards every *Rank* of *Magistrates*. The ancient History of the *Hebrews* affords us

us a short and excellent Definition of this Mischief; for whenever it reign'd amongst that People the Phrase used to express it is, *there was no King in Israel*, that is, *no Ruler whose Authority was regarded*, or whose *Decrees were held sacred*. In the ancient *Greek Republics*, there were *Magistrates* assign'd by the *Constitution* to watch over it, with a View to prevent this *dangerous Disease of State*. In *Athens* they were stiled *Archons*, in *Sparta*, *Ephori*, and so long as these did their *Duty*, the People never failed in theirs. But when these forgot their *Characters*, and endeavour'd to apply the *Power* vested in them to *private Purposes*, instead of the *public Service*, they soon lost their *Credit*, and the *State* its *Being*. The like happen'd to the *Romans*, when the *Tribunes* affected to be their *Princes*, instead of their *Protectors*, and brought the *Weight* of the *People* to bear intollerably hard upon that *Frame of Government*, which it had been their *Interest* to support. When the *Names* and *Shadows* of *useful Offices* only remain, and the *Ends* for which they were instituted are *neglected*, *Authority* is *lost* of Course, nor is there any Method of proving that *Government* was instituted for the *Sake* of the *governed*, more plain than this, that whenever it ceases to promote this *End*, it becomes the *Object* either of *Hatred* or *Contempt*. Of *Hatred*, if supported by an *armed Force*, of *Contempt*, if it be *destitute* of that *Guard*: This is a fair and candid Account of the *Matter*, drawn from *Reason* and *Experience*, by which Men arrive at *Certainty*, and not an artful *Deduction* of a precarious *Proposition* by the *Help* of *Rhetorical Flourishes*.

As to the second Distemper I have mention'd, it commonly discovers itself by a boundless Propensity to Pleasure, a prodigious Relaxation of Principles, and an Epidemic Corruption of Manners. The old Book I cited before has a wondrous pathetic Phrase for this Grievance, for as often as the People were in this Condition, they are said to have done every Man what was right in his own Eyes. How accurate, how expressive this Description ! To follow the Dictates of private Interest, to pursue the Projects plann'd by our Passions, to run wildly into the Gratification of every sensual Appetite, or every idle Whim of a distemper'd Imagination, merely to indulge ourselves without Respect to Society, is that kind of Disorder which I meant to trace. When the Bulk of any Nation comes to be agitated by such a Spirit, it must necessarily follow, that however excellent their Laws, they must stand repealed in Fact, though they retain their Places still in their Statute Books. It was so at Athens, when she boasted herself the politeſt and the freest State in Greece. The City was adorn'd with the nobleſt Buildings, her Citizens were rever'd abroad, and appeared with the greatest Eclat at home; her Commerce was moſt extenſive, her Fame at its biggest Pitch when Alcibiades then a Boy, gave Pericles this wise Advice, that ſince it puzzled him to make up the public Accompts, he had best ſtudy how he might avoid making them up at all. The Corruption of the Times made it easy for him to carry this Scheme into Execution, and he escaped by plunging his Country into the Peloponnesian War, by which ſhe was undone for ever. At Rome the Case was the ſame, when the great Men began to value themselves on a fine Taste, and an immense

immense Expence, instead of that unblemish'd Probity and illustrious Poverty by which their Ancestors were distinguished, Things quickly took a new Turn, and that glorious Common-wealth which had been the Mistress of Nations, and the Sovereign of the World, sunk into Slavery, the meanest and basest Slavery, becoming a Prey to the most unworthy of her Subjects.

As to the last of the Cases hinted at before, it's Marks are the most evident of all. A People affected thereby, feel the Pangs of Poverty, without discerning its true Cause; because those who ought to enquire into, and redress their Grievances, employ all their Skill and Pains either to stifle or Disguise them. Such a Nation, sensible of declining Trade, ascribe it now to one Thing, then to another, and by injudicious Attempts to rid them of supposed Burdens, render themselves still more incapable of bearing that Load which they want the Judgment to shake off. Instead of *virtuous Industry*, there prevails amongst them a *fraudulent Dexterity* in coining artificial Riches, which serve to conceal their true Condition from themselves, and to defend for a while the most *cunning* amongst them, from the *Miseries* felt by the most *Worthy*. We have no Examples of this kind in *antient History*, but the Instances which occur in the *Memoirs* of later Ages, are too numerous to be so much as mention'd. The great Kingdom of Spain, has long groaned under this kind of Oppression. The two famous States of *Venice* and *Ginda*, have suffer'd their Glories to fade, and their Strength to be exhausted, by not attending in Time to this Canker, and I could name another *Republic*, which is at last

last become sensible of this *Evil*, though somewhat of the *latest*. Before I dismiss this Subject, I must observe, that this Sort of *Consumption* is unknown to *arbitrary Governments*. Under them, *Oppression* is a *Feaver*, the *Acuteness* of which quickly obliges their *Rulers* to have Recourse to *proper Remedies*, how little *Pity* soever they may have in their own *Natures*. There must be some kind of *Liberty* to nourish this *lingring Disease*, and to feed the *Patient* with *Hopes* till the *Distemper* preys upon the *Vitals*.

If therefore the *Symptoms*, inseperable from these *Maladies*, are undeniably to be *met* with *amongst us*, we may very safely conclude, that our *Condition* is very *dangerous*, and that nothing can prevent it from becoming *desperate*, but timely *Attention*, and a *speedy* and *vigorous Application* of *proper Remedies*. For, as it is certainly false Practice, when *State Physicians* feed the *Humour* of their Patients, and encourage them in taking *unnecessary Medicines*, by favouring *vulgar Mistakes*, and nursing *imaginary Diseases*; so on the other Hand, it is as *inexcusable* to *possess* them with *false Notions* of their own *Strength*, and by furnishing them with *artificial Spirits* to keep them in *perpetual Exercise*, too violent perhaps for them even when in *full Health*, till their *Constitutions* are quite exhausted, and *Death* and *Despair* surprize them at once. When a *Nation* is in such Circumstances, those who *flatter* them *least*, are undoubtedly their *best Friends*, and such as are for going to the *Bottom* of Things, better *Physicians* than those, who for the Sake of their *own Profit*, and perhaps *so* *arbitrary* *and* *unjust* *actions* *done* *by* *them* *itself*.

a pretty large Share of present Applause, would content themselves with a palliative Cure.

In applying what has been already said to the State of our own Nation, I shall make Use of all that Tenderness and Precaution which so nice a Subject requires. In the first Place, then it is certain, that from the Revolution to this Time, the People have upon very many Occasions, betrayed a great Disrespect towards their Governors, and this not only against particular Administrations, but against the Legislature itself. The Pretence has always been the ill Conduct of their Governors, and that this in all Cases has not been a mere Pretence, will sufficiently appear if we consider that in some Part of King William's Reign, their Disatisfaction to the Ministry was countenanced by the House of Commons, as in the latter Part of that Reign, their Dislike to the House of Commons was approved and applauded by the Court, and they were encouraged to take such Liberties with their Representatives, as appear surprizing to us, who live in later and calmer Times. In the Reign of Queen ANNE, the People had such a Veneration for the Church, that they were thought deficient in their Regard to the Ministry, the Queen, and the Parliament itself, but in time they fully justified themselves to her Majesty, by resenting that State of Dependance, in which she was held by some great Men, and carrying their Point at last, what had been Faction for so many Years together, was taken for Sterling Loyalty, which was capable of bearing every Test. In the four last Years of the Queen, a great Part of the Nation grew out of Humour with the Measures she pursued, and reflected

fested severely on the Parliament which supported them. This Conduct of theirs, was fully justified by a Parliamentary Enquiry in the last Reign, the Severity of which in a great Measure recovered the Credit of that August Assembly, and taught the People to honour as became them, the great Council of the Nation, the natural Trustees of our Properties, and the legal Guardians of our Liberty.

By Degrees, however, this Awe wore off again, and in process of Time, there grew up a strong Spirit of Jealousy and Discontent, especially after the South-Sea Scheme took Place, and on it's Detection, the Criminals were countenanced by those to whom it belonged of right to have punished the Misdemeanours they had committed. Thence forward, the Common People grew afraid of those who ought to have been their surest Refuge, and began to surmise, that the Senate took too large a Share of Power to themselves, and left too little to those from whom they deriv'd it. Stung with these Apprehensions, and Daily provok'd with what they took, for Instances of that Disposition, which gave Distate, they lost all Temper, and fell exactly into those Notions, which we have shewn to be most Dangerous to a free Government.

In this Situation, Things were, when the Authors of the present Opposition, proposed their Plan, for restoring the Spirit of the Constitution, and Eradicating these Fears, from the Breasts of the People, whom they were willing to have gratified in two Points, Viz. The Shortning the Duration of Parliaments, and the excluding such Persons, from Seats there, as might be Suspected of having particular Interests, incompatible with Public Trust. This

Project

Project of theirs was so plausible; that we need not wonder a very great Part of the Nation gave into it, especially when we consider, that the *wisest Persons* in the Kingdom, even those who in this critical Juncture have been advanced to the  *Helm*, approv'd these *Proposals*, and contended warmly for their being carried into *Execution*. It must be owned, that notwithstanding many Years Struggle, and an *Opposition* carried on with equal *Spirit* and *Industry*, they were still baffled, by Dint of *Voices* however, and not of *Argument*; for these great *Patriots* most judiciously insisted, that their not being able to carry these *Points*, was the fullest *Proof* of their *Rectitude*, since they were defeated by *Men* who had visibly an *Interest* in keeping Parliaments *long on Foot*, and thought themselves bound to defend the *Innocency* of *Places*, because they enjoyed them. Now upon this Subject it is difficult to pronounce, for beyond Question the People are as to it still *dissatisfied*, and with Respect to the *Seasonableness* of the *Remedy*, we can say nothing against it which will not justify those whom the *Voice* of the Nation condemn'd *last Year*, and at the same Time reflect on the *Judgment* of our present great *Men*, who so strenuously maintain'd the *Expediency*, and so often divided in favour of a *Law to repeal the Septennial Act*, and for a *comprehensive Place-Bill*.

We must indeed allow, that they have *chang'd* their Sentiments since, and that as they are *older*, they ought consequently to be *wiser*. But then here lies the Misfortune, they have now an *Interest* in *long Parliaments*, which they had not before, and they have *swallow'd* those *Places* for

which they declared they had no *Appetite*. Upon this sudden Turn in their Conduct, two very hard Questions have been moved, the first is, whether this Departure from their *Principles*, does not deprive their *present Reasonings* of all *Authority*; for how can we take their *Words* now, for what the other Day they *denied*? The other is, whether their own *Example* is not the clearest Demonstration that can be demanded of the *Validity* of their former *Arguments*; for must not such Things be excessively dangerous to a free *People*, as have produced such *strange Effects* upon their *Friends*. These Gentlemen were very lately owned the *wisest* and *ablest* Persons in the *Kingdom*, and when they were so acknowledg'd, they told us, that *Placemen* were *dangerous* in *Parliament*, because their *Places* influenced their *Conduct*, do not their *Actions* teach us so still? Would any *sober Man* be persuaded out of his *Love of Temperance*, by hearing a *Philosopher* declaim in Favour of *Drunkenness*, if he saw that contrary to *Custom* the *Sage* had got a *Cup in his Head*?

To speak farther to this *Point* with Candour and Decency. We must acknowledge, that *unbounded Licence* reigns amongst us, that the *common People* have lost *Respect* for *Dignity*, and that the *middle Sort* are full of *Jealousies* and *Suspicions*. The *Court Writers* are continually complaining of the former, and their own *Instructions* sufficiently testify the Sense of the latter. The *Fact* then is out of *Dispute*, we are certainly sick of this dangerous *Disease*; the next Thing to be enquired is, whether we ought to follow the *Advice* of those who propose to us a Method of eradicating the *Cause* of the

the *Distemper*, or whether we shall let it *take its Course*, because our *Quondam Doctors* are become *above their Business*. If they have chang'd their *Language*, they must be very *popular* indeed to introduce their *new Dialect* in so short a Time too throughout the *Nation*, and to talk of forcing the *People* to alter their *Tone* would be likewise a little *hard*, since they are but *Parrots* of their own *teaching*. What may be now stiled the *Clamour* of the *Mob*, was t'other Day the *Voice* of the *Nation*, and so avow'd to be by the *Folks* of whom I am speaking, and as to the *Business* of *instructing*, the *Form*, is all that belongs to the *Places* from whence they come, they take their *Matter* from your own *Report*. This is the plain, the *naked Truth*, I have kept strictly to my Promise, I have not either *coined a Fact*, or *heighten'd* any *Matter* of *Fact* by my manner of *relating* it.

The *Merit* then of the *Opposition* in this Respect lies here. They have proposed to secure the *Freedom of Parliament*, by restraining the unwar-rantable Practices of *returning Officers*, of which we have had such flagrant as well as such recent *Examples*, and which left even the *Mob* without a Doubt, that one of the most *solemn Acts* in our *Government*, might through the *Iniquity* of a very *insignificant Instrument* be turned into a *down-right Farce*. Having thus secured the *Door*, they next proposed *sweeping* the *House*, and this by a full and comprehensive *Place-Bill*. The Reason of the Thing has been over and over determined by the *Legislature*, the single Point now in Question is, whether these *Acts* shall be *living Laws*, or *dead Letters*, whether they shall be *Things for Shew*,

or for Use? When this Provision was made, the Opposition were for going one Step farther, and having provided against the known Methods of affecting the Freedom of Parliaments, they were desirous of assigning a Remedy too for the Mischiefs that might be introduced by the intriguing Heads of bad Ministers in succeeding Times, and with this View they insisted on the Repeal of the *Septennial Act*. Will any Man say, that this Scheme is at all inconsistent, or that it is calculated to serve private Purposes; or is there any Reason, that they should give it up, when the great Men who were very lately in the same Sentiments, have not thought fit to prescribe any other Method for the Cure of that Disease, which they still acknowledge, and which they seem to be apprehensive, may some Time or other become fatal to themselves, as well as to the State.

As to the second Point, the *Libertinism* of our Morals is to the full as notorious as the *Licentiousness* of our Speech. We are become as remarkable for *Corruption*, as we were formerly for our public Spirit. This is confessed by ourselves, and published through all the *World*, and therefore one would think, that every Man who is free from this Taint, should be desirous of seeing such a national Reflection wiped off. I will not say that the Source of this great Mischief has been the Conduct of People in Power; but most certain it is, that if Corruption once reigns in high Life, the Reformation must begin there. It is a vain Thing to expect that the *Vulgar* should be honest, when *Honesty* is laughed at by their *Betters*, and it is ridiculous to suppose, that the *Laws* should answer their

their *Ends* in *common Affairs*, when it is evident, that they have *lost* their *Power* in those of a superior Nature. To speak the *Truth*, which can never be a *Crime* amongst free People, every Nation is guided by the *Examples* of such as are most distinguished therein by *Birth*, by *Fortune*, or by *Office*, and if there be no *Religion*, no respect to *Principle*, no regard to public *Good* visible amongst them, we cannot expect to find it among such as in the *Nature of Things*, must be their *Dependants*.

We may easily illustrate this, by a too well known Example. When a Man of Rank takes it into his *Head* to alter the *Nature* of our *Constitution*, by making himself Master of a *Country Corporation*, and turning a Town vested with a Right of sending *Members* to *Parliament* into his *Borough*, the Methods that he takes, will go near to ruin the *Morals*, as well as to subvert the *Freedom* of such a Place. In the first Place, the *Notions* of the *Inhabitants* must be vitiated, they must be taught to prefer their *own Interest*, to that of the *Public*, and when they have done this, what shall hinder them from preferring their *own Interest* to *every other Man's*? By this Step, the very Basis of fair *Dealing*, is undermined, and a Man loses his *Principles* for ever. Next, he must be brought to believe that *Attachment* to the great *Man's* *Interest*, is a *Point of Honour*, and thus he is in the Situation of a *Higbwayman*, who substitutes fair *Dealing* to the *Gang*, instead of *Obedience* to the *Laws*, and fancies himself after repeated Acts of Villainy, a *Man of Honour* forsooth, because he is not *faithless* to his *Fellows*. Lastly, every such Person is bound to *hate* and *deride*, to *counteract* and *misrepresent*

present all who are not in his *great Man's Interest*. By proceeding in this Road, he loses the Dignity of a *free-born Briton*, and becomes as much a *Vassal* as his *Forefathers*, who by the Name of *Villains*, were sold together with the *Estate*, and a *Lord* transferred them with as little Ceremony, as the *Trees* that grew upon it. Such is the Progress of *Knavery, Deceit, and Corruption*; by such swift Strides, it passes from *one End of a Country to another*, and the *bad Examples* of a few, become sufficient to *mislead* sometimes the *greater Part* of a *Nation*.

Every *Mayor, Bailiff, or other Head Officer*, of a little *Borough*, acts entirely on the same Principles with a *Prime Minister*. If he is a *Man of Integrity*, and *wishes well* to his *Country*, and has withal a *clear Head*, and *good natural Parts*, he will procure many *Advantages* to the *Place* where he *presides*; if on the other Hand, he be a *weak Man*, he will do *less good* indeed; but then he will do *no burt*. But if such a Person be a *venal and corrupt Man*, he will be able to deffiminate his *Vices* through the whole *Extent* of his *Jurisdiction*, he will quickly either find or make *fit Instruments* for his *sinister Purposes*, and when he has once brought Men to think as he does, it will require an *Age* to purge out that *Villainy* which he will introduce in a *Year*. When once Men come to treat the *public Interest* lightly, they soon run into the *grossest Dishonesty*; for the whole *System of Morality* is built on a *political Basis*, and when we lose all *Reverence* for the *whole*, respect for *Individuals* can never hold us long. It may be true, that some *great Men* have behaved *well* in *private Life*, though *wickedly* in

in their *public Characters*; but then on a strict Review, this will be found either the *Effect* of a *natural Disposition*, for which no Man deserves *Praise*, or of a *refined Policy*, that the amiableness of his *private Character*, may screen him from *public Justice*. But in the common Course of Things, the *Case* is quite *otherwise*, and a *bad Man in Office*, is a *bad Man in every other Respect*.

But when these *Macchiavilean* Notions have prevailed for some time, they spread themselves so far, and meet with so many *Defenders*, that *Honesty* is put quite *out of Countenance*, and a Man who pretends to feel any Thing like a *Sense of Virtue* or *public Spirit*, is treated as a *Hypocrite*, or an *Enthusiast*. It is when Things are come to this pass, that a Country is in the *utmost Danger*; that the *Inhabitants* stand on the very brink of *Ruin*, and can be saved only by *frighting* them so much, as to make them start back. I will not say, that this is *our Case*, and yet a *certain Report* has said it, and that *Report* we know was framed by the *Friends* of those great *Folks*, who are now ready to frown if you mention *Corruption*. Yet, alas! if that *Report* be true, as we all know it is but *too true*, there never was such a *Sink of Corruption* as this Island, and to think that displaying this *Filth*, is equivalent to cleansing it, or that changing one *Set of Names* for another, is sufficient to atone for such a *Series of Offences* against the *Public*, is to believe what Mr. *Voltaire* says is true, viz. That we are no more like our *Forefathers*, than the *modern Italians* are like the *old Romans*, of which, if I were once convinced, I should not only think *Writing*, but *Living*, to little Purpose.

Having

Having shewn that the Great, and the Opposition are thus far agreed, that Corruption hath made a fatal Progress amongst us; we are next to consider, what both Parties have proposed, in order to remove so black a Stain, and to cure so dangerous an Evil. The Opposition have been for examining this Matter to the bottom, for laying all these Practices open, and for punishing such as have been concerned in them. This would certainly be an efficacious Remedy, it would convince the Nation of two Things; first, that injuring the Public, contriving the Ruin of our Government, and debasing the Minds of the People, are really Crimes, and not *Arcana Imperii*, the lawful Practices of Ministers; and such as their Trade requires, which some have not scrupled to give out. Secondly, it would shew all the World, that we are still sound at Heart, that we have yet Probity enough to start at such Iniquities, and that we do not want Courage or Power to punish them. These Reflections I must own, I have borrowed from the Report itself, and as it is the only Quotation I shall make, I beg Leave to give it the Reader as it stands there, that he may be convinced of the eminent Peril we are in, and learn from thence to discover whether there be yet a Possibility of our escaping or not. Thus speaks the Report.

" This Method of Corruption is as sure, and  
 " therefore your Committee apprehends as cri-  
 " minal a Way of subverting the Constitution, as  
 " by an armed Force; it is a Crime productive of  
 " a total Destruction of the very Being of this Go-  
 " vernment, and is so high and unnatural, that no-  
 " thing but the Powers of Parliament can reach it,  
 " and

" and as it can never meet with Parliamentary An-  
 " imadversion, but when it is unsuccessful, it must  
 " seek for it's Security in the Extant and Efficacy  
 " the Mischief it produces; and therefore your  
 " Committee apprehend it is the more necessary for  
 " your Consideration, while it's wants of Success, yet  
 " leaves an Opportunity to preserve and maintain  
 " your Independency for the future."

The Opposition are for prosecuting the Hint given in this Passage, that they may render it manifest, the Efficacy of Corruption has not yet reached so far, as to make Justice *ridiculous*, rather than *terrible*. If they carry their Point, it will be long before any *Man*, or any *Set of Men* will have Courage enough to tread in these *Paths* again; but if not, it will be no easy Matter to persuade the People that such as prevent *this*, mean to *walk in any other*. As to the *Councils of the Great* upon this *Head*, they remain a *perfect Secret*, and therefore as I would be very unwilling to *asperse* them, I shall not pretend to *guess* what they *really are*. Thus much I think the meanest *Man in Britain* may say, that to draw together such a *Number of Facts* as are included in the *Piece*, I just now quoted, to publish them to the *World* with such strong *Observations*, and after all to lay them *aside* again when they have served no *visible Purpose*, (but one that no *bones* *Man* can suspect they were *meant to serve*) is what the *present Age* must *blush to see*, and what *Poverty* will scarce be brought to *credit*.

Yet I am far from thinking this *Case* will even happen, on the contrary, I am apt to believe the giving a *Cbeck* to *Corruption* will be found most necessary by those who alone are able to encourage or

protect it; for when I come to examine the next Article, I dare say it will appear that we are too far gone to bear with it any longer; that in short, the Disease will certainly kill us, if it be not quickly cured, and that therefore, such as have the Care of the State, must have Recourse to a right Régimen, if it were not as we ought to suppose it is, perfectly agreeable to their Inclinations.

I come now to the last Point I mentioned, which is the draining the Wealth of a Country, under Pretence of employing it for its necessary Services. The Signs of this Disease have been already mention'd, and I doubt it will be thought a Work of Supererrogation for me to prove otherwise than by a Repetition of them, and an Appeal to the Consciences of my Readers, that in our political Capacity we are in the utmost Danger of dying of this Distemper. But as I abhor the Imputation of an Incendiary, and endeavour to explain Things that are, not to suggest such as never existed, so I am willing to go the deeper into this Matter, that Men of the meanest Understandings may know what it is their Duty to bear, and when they may with Reason find Fault with such Impositions as fall upon them for the Support of Government. In doing this, I shall be obliged to pay a stricter Regard to Method than I have hitherto done, and this for the Sake of convincing every impartial Peruser, that the Opposition have not been guided by Prejudices, or excited by Peevishness to complain on this Head, and to endeavour to give their Constituents Light into the Causes of their bearing such heavy Burdens, where it was out of their Power to give them Ease.

All

All Governments, as well as all Families, must have a certain Rule of Expence, beneath which, if they can be supported, they must grow rich, and above which, if they are rash enough to spend, they must inevitably become poor. Debts and Distresses are as certain Marks of want of Economy, in one Case, as in the other ; for it is as much the Duty of an Administration to live within Bounds, as of a private Man, and that this is done, concerns a Nation as much as does a Household. But it may be said, that it is not so easy for a People to discover when their Rulers raise, more than is requisite, as for a Family to know when the Master of it runs out. But this I think, is saying more than can be proved, and I dare say, is very seldom said ; but as a knavish Steward excuses his Master's Extravagance, because the more he throws away, the more this knavish Servant picks up.

One Method of computing the Circumstances of a Nation, is by considering the Proportion between the Hands that add to the national Stock, and the Hands that decrease it. About the Time of the Revolution, it was computed that the latter was to the former as 28 to 26, that is to say, such as earned nothing themselves, but lived upon what others earned, were considerably above one half of the Nation ; now it is very easy to conceive, that if the Number of the Industrious hath been since lessened, and the Number of the Idle increased, under Colour of public Service, then the Income of the Nation must be lessen'd proportionably, and consequently we must be less able to furnish a large Revenue than we were at that Time. This I think is so plain, that no Man can doubt, or be at a loss

about it ; but if there should be such a Person, I would advise him to apply this to his own Family, and consider whither, if half his Servants were *idle*, he could live at the same rate he does, while they *work*. But if we reflect on the great *standing Army*, that we have long kept up, the prodigious Number of *Custom-house* and *Excise-Officers*, that have been added since that Time, the Swarms of *Clerks* and other *Dependants*, on our Offices, where nothing is got, and on our *public Companies* that carry on no Trade, and the long *List* of other *Employments* that have arisen out of our *Luxuries*, *Debts* and *Taxes*, and add to these the prodigious Increase of our Poor, by the Ruin of our Manufactures, and the Decay of Trade, we shall easily apprehend that according to this *Rule*, the *Computation* is considerably against us, and that the Scale of the *Idle* preponderates, that of the *Industrious* by very far.

Another way of estimating the *Condition* of Subjects under any Government is to compare what they have paid within a *certain Compass of Time*, with what they have paid within a *like Compass* after that Period. This was a Method a late Writer took who call'd himself *the By-stander*, but a Method very unfit for his Purpose, and which it is certain he would never have mentioned, if he had well understood what he was about. But if that extraordinary Piece has done the World no other Good, it has at least produced *an Answer* wherein these *Computations* are verified from *Records*, and in this *Answer*, we are told, that all the Money raised during the 24 Years Reign of King CHARLES II. viz. from 1661 to 1684, amounted

ed to no more than 32,474,265 l. 4 s. 9 d.  $\frac{1}{2}$   
 whereas we raised in the Reign of King WILLIAM  
 at least 70 Millions, and in that of Queen ANNE,  
 not less than 80, though both those Reigns taken  
 together, made not above 26 Years, and from  
 that Time to this, we have raised upwards of 2  
 100 Millions more. Now that the *Wealth* of the  
 Nation has not increased in any Proportion to this  
*Expence*, nay, that it has not in fact increased at all,  
 has been *made out* before; for though it be true,  
 that many private *Men* have grown rich without  
 Industry, yet that a Nation should any other Way  
 acquire *Wealth*, is repugnant to Common Sense.  
 This being the Case, it is impossible to doubt that  
 increasing our *Annual Expences* to three Times  
 what they were, must impoverish the *Nation* ex-  
 cessively, or which is the same Thing, in other  
 Words, must render the Situation of the *Subjects*  
 in general, much worse than it was before. And  
 that this really is the *Case*, may be still made more  
 evident by a great Variety of Arguments, let us  
 mention only a few.

We have been for above this *forty Years* con-  
 stantly running in *Debt*; now it is certain, that a  
*Nation*, like a *private Man*, keeps *out* of *Debt* as  
 long as it is possible. It has indeed been said, that  
 in *former Times* this was *not* our *Case*, but that in  
 King WILLIAM's Time the Ministry *run us deeply*  
 in *Debt*, when there was no Occasion for it. Let  
 us consider *why* they did so? Why the People  
 truly, who had lived under former Governments,  
 and knew what it was to pay but *moderate Taxes*,  
 were not in the Humour to *pay more*, and their  
 Stubborness in this respect, threw the *Load off*  
 themselves

themselves upon *Posterity*. The former was right, tho' the latter was wrong. But taking the thing as it is represented to us, if the *Circumstances* of the *Nation*, would then have born raising the *Supplies* for the *current Service* within the *Year*, and the *Ministry* did not raise them, then the *Ministry* were to *blame*; and this shews that the *People* had done well, if they had obliged them to have acted *otherwise*. But what is this to us, the *Necessity* of *running* in *Debt* now is visible to every *Body*. Tho' they might have raised *three or four*; it is impossible that we with the *weight* of the *Debt* they left us, should raise *seven or eight Millions* in a *Year*. Yet I am persuaded, *Posterity* will take it unkindly, if we should for a *part*, a *small part* of our *Expences* for this *present Year*, contract and leave upon them, a *Debt* for *32 Years* to come. If ever there was an *Instance* of *bad OEconomy*, this of *running* in *Debt*, continuing in *Debt*, and never *thinking* how to get out of *Debt*, is one with a *Vengeance*; and if it makes no *Impression*, why then——not only we——but our *Creditors* must have a bad *Time* of it.

Another Argument may be drawn from the *Nature* of our *Funds*, and the great *Advantages* that we have given to such as place their *Money* there, over the *landed and trading Interest*. To give my Reader a just *Idea* of this, I must put him in mind of a *common Case*. A young *Gentleman* at first coming to his *Fortune* takes a liking to *Gaming*, *Drinking*, or *Whoring*, perhaps to all three. He first out-runs the *Income* of his *Estate*; well then, rather than *retrench*, or *curtail* his *Pleasures*, What does he do, why, he *fells his Woods*, grants *Annuities*

*ties, discounts Notes, deals with Usurers, gives large Præmiums, and pays high Interest, and that he may keep touch with these sort of People; he puts off his honest Tradesmen, and racks his poor Tenants.* The very View of this Case, is sufficient to convince any Person of common Sense, that a Man who acts thus, is not either prudent, or honest; nay, it may serve to convince him of another thing too, that if he had been either, he wou'd have chose to have thought how to get rid of his Creditors, rather than how to oblige them; for it is certain, that the Civility a Man shews when he is in Debt, does not proceed so much from Sense of Obligation, as from the fear of suffering; and it is also clear, that no Man is so cautious of his Credit, as he who every Day stands in need of it: After making these Remarks, I need not dwell long on the Application.

When once it was resolved to run the Nation in Debt, it became necessary to get People in the humour to lend their Money; and this gave Birth to most of the Companies in Being, as well as to many other Things. In virtue of this laudable Invention of Stocks, true Industry, and that Commerce which is beneficial to a Nation, have been thrust out of Doors. Instead of an Estate in Land; instead of a Shop and Warehouse in the City; instead of Ships at Sea and Factories abroad, a Man may turn 40, or 50,000 Pound in a two pair of Stairs Room; or if he has a mind like Guy, to make it a couple of Plumbs in a Garret. He has nothing to do but to slip now and then, from thence into the Alley, or to some Places adjoining, and there without the Fatigue of Packing, he may deal in very weighty Commodities, and raise to himself an immense Fortune,

by

by pushing his Money about, *this way, and that*; while he does his Country, or his Countrymen, not a *pennyworth* of Service, but must die with the dissatisfaction of knowing; that is to say, if he thinks that he never got the *Bread he eat*. Thus *indefatigable Cuming* runs away with the Reward of *virtuous Industry*, and a *Nobleman's Wife*, whose Head is turn'd for this Sort of *Gaming*, shall acquire a *vast Estate*, in an Age which Bankrupts one Merchant out of three.

To oblige People of this *Cast*, their Method of employing *Money*, has the Sanction of *public Faith*, for it's Exemption from all *public Duties*, and thus every Man pays the *Debts* of the *Nation* out of his *private Fortune*, except those who have their *Fortunes* in *them*. The Gentleman groans under the *Load* of the *Land-Tax*. The Trader sweats under numberless *Impositions*. And the Usurer who contributes not *Six-pence* to the *public Stock* by his *Labour*, gives as little out of his *Gettings*. I do not say that this is *unnecessary*, or as things stand at present, that it is *unjust*; but this I say, that it is *hard*, *very hard* upon those who pay towards the Discharge of the *Interest*, upon which these People live, and pay it out of the *Fruits* of their honest Labour; and therefore we need never wonder, that when there is any talk of lowering Interest, or paying off public Debts, there is so great a *Clamour* raised against it, for it is plain, that if we go on in this Course, we soon come to such a *Pass*, as that the *Proprietors* of the public Debts shall be *too heavy* in point of *Interest* for all other *Proprietors*, and then modern Policy will be at the *highest Pitch* of Perfection, and all the industrious

dustrious Part of the *Nation*, if they think fit to *stay in it*, will work as hard as they can work, — not for *themselves* — but for the *Idle*. And yet these *idle People* will, *ten to one*, continue to *believe* that they are the best Sort of Folks in the *Nation*.

That we may draw to a Conclusion in some Time, and not dwell too long on such disagreeable Subjects, I will mention but *one Argument* more, and that shall be the *several Methods* taken to supply the *Deficiency of real Wealth*, by *Tallies, Bonds, Notes*, and many other Contrivances. These are understood to be great *Helps to Trade*, and so I confess they might be, if they were *circulated* only among *Traders*, for then we might be pretty certain, that the *real Value* of these *circulating Certificates* existed *somewhere*, which we know is *not* the Case at present, for if it were, the *Approach of War*, or the *Rumour* of an *Invasion*, could not so easily, or so deeply affect them, as we know it *has done* and *would do*. On this Account, we may lay it down as a Thing certain, that as *Lotteries* give a *Check to Trade*, so the circulating of this kind of *Paper Treasure* serves to *conceal* our Circumstances, and to prevent our *Feeling* the gradual *Decay* of our *Wealth*, as well as to serve the *Purposes* of *the Politicians*, and to administer to all the *Ends of Luxury*. In short, there is not that Difference between *private* and *public Affairs* which some *crafty Writers* would make us believe; they are generally speaking, govern'd by the *same Maxims*, and ought therefore to be judg'd by the *same Rules*: Frugality, Industry, and a virtuous Behaviour, is as *necessary* to make the State *flourish*, as to better the *Circumstances*

*stances of it's meanest Subjeſt and Profuſion ; Idleneſs, and a total Corruption of Manners, will as certainly beggar a Kingdom, as it would bankrupt any Man in it.*

There may be, in all probability, a Set of *carping Critics*, who will take *Exception* at this Manner of *stating Facts*, and pretend, that to *catch the Vulgar*, I write down to their *Taste*, and by giving a *new Turn to political Subjects*, endeavour to render such Things *ridiculous*, as ought to be the Objects of *Reverence*, and to make those People *Judges*, who in the Nature of Things, can never be brought to apprehend the *Matters* of which I would have them judge. But to this I answer, that *familiar Comparisons* best explain *all Subjects*, and when used with Decency and Discretion, contribute more towards the spreading *true Science*, than all the *methodical Systems* that ever were published. I say farther, that I use them, because I seek to be *underſtood*, and these solemn Gentlemen *disclaim* them for the *contrary Reason*, because they would keep their *real Sentiments* in the *Dark*, and delude the People with *Speeches* that seem to have a *contrary meaning*. They would perswade them, that *Taxes* only serve to *circulate Money*, that the *Funds* are so many *salutary Contrivances* for the *Maintainance* of *Widows* and *Orphans*, without exposing them to the *Plague* of *doing something to get their Bread*, as was the *barbarous Custom* of former Ages ; that *Lotteries* are thought of, purely to *surprize good Subjects*, with *great Estates*, without giving them the *Trouble* of *getting them* ; that *public Companies* are for the *Benefit* of *Trade*, or at least of *Traders*, because so many *Citizens* are provided for as *Directors*, and that

that the *Liberty* such odd *Fellows* as I, are allowed of talking against these public *Benefits*, is preferable to the *Freedom* our *Fore-fathers* enjoyed, when *Taxes*, *Debts* and *Lotteries* were Things *unheard* of, when a *Merchant* of *London* contested *Custams* with the *Crown*, and the Word *Excise*, if pronounced in *Parliament*, would have drawn a *Reprimand*, at least if not a *Commitment*.

Another civiller Sort of *Criticks*, will furnish out a new Set of *Objections*, such as the Inexpediency of making these Things known to the *Vulgar*, the Danger of laying open to them the *Secrets of Government*, and the Folly of putting it into the Power of that hot-mouth'd Beast the *Magnitude*, to take the Bit in its *Mouth*, and run away with its *Rider*. But these soft spoken Gentlemen ought to consider that Exceptions of this Sort are a little out out of *Date*, for as Government concerns every Man, so it seems but natural that every Man should concern himself about *Government*, and as the lowest *Fellow* in the Kingdom contributes out of what he gets to the *public Service*, so it seems but just that he should, if he has a Mind, know what he pays for, and see, if he can see, whether the *Public* is well served or not. If the meaner Sort of People were spared in *public Impositions*, and only Men of a certain *Estate* paid towards the *Expences of Government*, there would be some *Colour of Justice* in talking of *Rabble* and *Mob*, and exclaiming against the *Insolence* of the *Dregs* of the *People*. But while it is as it is, that every Man from the *Crown* of his *Hat* that covers his *Head*, to the *Sole* of the *Shoe* that he treads under *Foot*, wears nothing, out of which he does not pay towards the

*Support of the State, and therefore cannot escape paying, unless he goes naked, and while it is impossible for a Man to live, though it were upon brown Bread and Small-Beer, without contributing to the Maintenance of those who rule him.* I should be glad to know how consistently with *Justice* and *Equity* any Creature that *breaths* the *British Air*, should be deprived of his *Right* of enquiring and judging whether we are well or ill governed, while we call ourselves a *free People*.

The *Mischiefs* that are supposed to flow from these *Doctrines*, are meer *Bugbears* and *Chimera's*, a Sort of *Rawheads* and *Bloodybones*, invented by *political Nurses* to fright their *Children* from *squalling*, when they are *too lazy* or *too proud* to undress and pull out the *Pins* that prick them. While a People may *enquire*, they will never *rebel*; but the surest Way to make them *act*, is to forbid them to *talk*, as if you attempt to tye a Man's *Hands*, or to gag him, he naturally supposes that you intend to cut his *Throat*, or at least to make *free* with his *Pockets*. In such a Country as this, the People need not recur to *Insurrections*, those are *fit Remedies* only under *arbitrary Governments*. We are *free* by our *Laws*, and therefore must have a *legal Remedy* for *every Evil*. The single Enquiry then is under what *Evils* we *suffer*, what *Remedies* are most like to give us *Relief*, and by whom those *Remedies* have been *proposed*, since questionless they are our *Physicians*. On this Subject, therefore, I shall offer a few *free Thoughts* as they rise in my Mind, and so leave my *Readers* to their own *Reflections*:

It

It must be acknowledged on all Hands, that the *Opposition* have constantly and uniformly exclaimed against the Waste of *public Treasure*, the Squandering *People's Money*, increasing the Number of their *Taxes*, and declining all Thoughts of decreasing their *Debts*. It must be likewise own'd, that they have upon every Occasion opposed such Measures as have had a Tendency to these *Mischiefs*; they have been against indefinite *Grants*, *Votes of Credit*, Sums given without Account, raising unnecessary *Troops*, or raising necessary *Troops*, in too expensive a Way, against *Negotiations* without End, and *Armaments* that *burt none*, but *ourselves*. They have earnestly pressed for *reirenching* our *annual Expences*, for a *Commission* to review the management of the *Revenue* for several Years past, and another to settle and state the *Debts* of the Nation. They have more than once proposed, that *some Method* should be taken to *stop these* at least, till a way could be found to *pay them*, and they have always protested against applying any other Way the *sinking Fund*, the only Method that ever was thought of for *paying it*. They have for twenty Years together expostulated with the *Friends* of the *Ministry*, whenever they have attempted to create *new Taxes*, or to continue *old ones* for *new Terms*; they have bewailed the Misfortune of the People to be continually feeling *fresh Weight*, without receiving any Addition either of Strength or Spirits. In a Word, they have manifested their Concert, and avowed their Dislike of what they conceived would be fatal to their *Country*, and this they have done at the Expence of their *Characters* and *Fortunes*. In the former, they have suffered by the Imputati-

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on of being *disaffected*; the latter has been impaired not only by their constant serving the Nation at their own *Expence*, but by their being obliged to spend their own *Money* against that of the Nation, in order to have the *Honour* to serve it at their own *Expence*, and to be able to propose their Doubts, to lay open their Jealousies, and to expose to the People's Representatives whatever they took to be *Grievances* on the *People*.

As to any *Propositions*, made by the *Great*, either for lessning our *Charge*, for lowering our *Impostions*, or for putting our *Debts* into a *Train of Payment*, I must say it frankly, I know of *none*. They frequently speak indeed in very pathetic Terms of supporting the *Honour* and *Dignity* of the *Crown*, of furnishing *Supplies* for the *public Service*, and of making good the *Deficiencies* of former *Grants*. They commonly display their *Eloquence*, in support of *Laws* for securing and increasing the *Revenue*, for appointing and ascertaining new *Funds*, and as in the Case of the *Gin-Act*, for preventing the *Crown's Loss* by the *People's Gain*, though in the Event, the Terms were reversed, for the *People got nothing*, and the *Crown all*. No doubt if these worthy Persons would apply themselves as assiduously to the *Points* which the *Patriots* pretend to make their *Care*, they might succeed as happily in them, as they do in their *Expedients* for raising those *vast Sums*, which they find *annually* requisite for the *Service* of a *Nation*, which it is to be feared, may sometime or other be unable to reward such able Servants, at least as amply as she has hitherto done. Dr. *Davenant* foresaw this above *forty Years ago*, and told us

us very prophetically in a Book he published about that Time, that as we could never hope to thrive or grow rich as a Nation, while the *Expences* of our *Government* exceeded two Millions three Hundred Pounds per Annum, so if we went on in the Train we were then, of giving a *Loose* to our *Expences*, and contracting *Debts* without *Bowels* for *Posterity*, we might at length come to raise six or seven Millions a Year as long as it would last. As we have fulfilled the latter Part of this *Prediction*, so methinks it is high Time we took the first into our *Consideration*, for without *Question*, the Time is not far off, when even the most *consummate* *Politicians* will find it surpass their Skill to draw *Water* out of an *empty Well*.

We have now run through the *Rise*, *Progress* and several *Fates* of the *Opposition*; we have seen it *feeble* in its *Beginning*, and despised for its *Feebleness*; we have seen it continually *growing*, notwithstanding all the *Pains* taken to *depress* it. We have known it *thrive* upon *Defeats*, and we now see it in a *worse Condition* for it's *Victory*. From this Prospect of the *Events* which have attended it, we have learned to distinguish between the *Pretences* of some who are, or have been *engaged* in it, and the *Principles* of the *Opposition* itself. The former we have discovered to be sometimes *iniquitous*, and always *irregular*, the latter perfectly *just*, and everlastingly *the same*. This has explained to us the *Folly* of conceiving amiss of *Opposition* through the *Conduct* of such as have been at the *Head* of it, and this has taught, or ought to teach us, that an *Opposition* never suffers by the

*Loss*

*Loss of such Heads.* A *Faction* cannot be without *Leaders*, because the Design of a *Faction*, is to bring those who compose it, into *Power*, and there is no managing a *War* without a *Commander in Chief*, and subordinate *Officers*. But an *Opposition* is quite another *Thing*, it aims at a *Change of Measures*, and not of *Men*, and therefore is never in a greater Probability of *succeeding*, than when such as compose it, are bound to each other by no other *Tie* than that of *Sameness of Sentiment*, and propound nothing more to *themselves* than obliging *others* to act *right*.

We have still done more than all this, we have examined the *Grounds* and *Reasons* of the *Opposition*. We have considered the *Nature* of those *Things* of which they *complain*, independent of their *Relation* to *ourselves*, and we have seen that they are real and not imaginary *Evils*; that they are productive of ruinous *Consequences*, and that as all this is discoverable by *Common Sense*, so it has been justified likewise by *constant Experience*. We have then enquired into the *Evidence* in *Proof* of these *Mischiefs* actually subsisting *amongst us*, and after these necessary *Steps*, we have taken a *View* of the *Remedies* proposed, and of the *Arguments* offered to shew that they would *radically* cure these *Mischiefs*. Thus we have gone through the whole of what we *proposed*, and if we have committed any *Error* in the *Course* of our *Reasonings*, upon so many and so intricate *Subjects*, the whole lies still before *us*, and we may easily trace that *Error* back to its *Source*, and consequently have it in our *Power* to *rectify* our *Notions*. All this we have done without

but *Heat* or *Passion*, without *Prejudice* or *personal Resentment*, we have pursued *Truth* and not *Opinion*; we have prosecuted *national Advantages*, and not sought to recommend the *Designs* of any *Party*; we have united the *free-thinking* of the *Whigs*, with the *Public Spirit* of the *Tories*, and we have shewn that a *rational Opposition* comprehends all that is *good*, and rejects all that is *evil* in every *Party*.

Upon the whole, we have made it manifest that *the Opposition*, strictly speaking, hath nothing in it of *Disaffection* or *Disloyalty*, but has a direct Tendency to encrease the *Power* of the *Crown*, by procuring the *Good* of the *Subject*. We have made it clear, that the mixing these *noble Views* with *personal Resentments*, is the only means by which they can be defeated, and this has enabled us to *explain* what so many has seemed *inexplicable*, the short turn made by those who in the midst of their *Professions* of their intending only the *former*, were in their *Hearts* resolved to proceed no farther than the *latter*. By doing this, we have done our utmost to establish *the Opposition* for the future on its *proper Basis*, to point out the *Advantages* it may procure to the *Nation*, and the Necessity there is of procuring them some way or other, if we mean *well* to the *Nation*, and therefore we presume, that we have effectually executed what our *Title* promised, and that within the narrow Compass of this *Discourse*, the candid Reader will find the *Case of the Opposition impartially stated.*



6.1.7.1.2